



CITY OF CHATTAHOOCHEE

RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY PARTNERSHIP PROJECT



OVERVIEW

Developing sustainable stormwater management and green space strategies to improve resilience and support community long-term recovery.

COMMUNITY INPUT

The project team worked closely with city staff and the community to respond to specific community goals and challenges with a set of sustainable design options that foster a strong sense of place. The project team provided the following range of virtual and socially-distanced options for community input in context of Covid-19 safety concerns.

- City Council Meeting presentation held on August 4, 2020.
- Posters on display at City Hall and Chattahoochee Main Street accompanied by a paper survey.
- Virtual open house via the project web page with video presentations and online survey.
- Stakeholder meetings held virtually the week August 10, 2020.

Overall the participants expressed support and enthusiasm for the proposed designs. The concepts on the following pages reflect the community input provided.

INTRODUCTION

The city of Chattahoochee (the City) is challenged with the daunting task of recovering from the devastating impacts of Hurricane Michael, a Category 5 hurricane that made landfall in October 2018. To support physical and economic recovery in Chattahoochee, the Recovery and Resiliency Partnership Project (R2P2) provided technical assistance by developing strategies and design concepts that bolster resiliency to stormwater impacts, improve quality of life and support sustainable redevelopment. The design process was guided by the following technical assistance goals:

- Integrate long-term sustainability and resilience into rebuilding.
- Support a vibrant and prosperous downtown with improved streetscapes and activated alleys.
- Enhance civic spaces to support downtown revitalization.
- Create a regional recreational destination to support local economic recovery.
- Provide connections to businesses and community amenities.
- Create connections between downtown businesses and regional recreation opportunities.

ABOUT

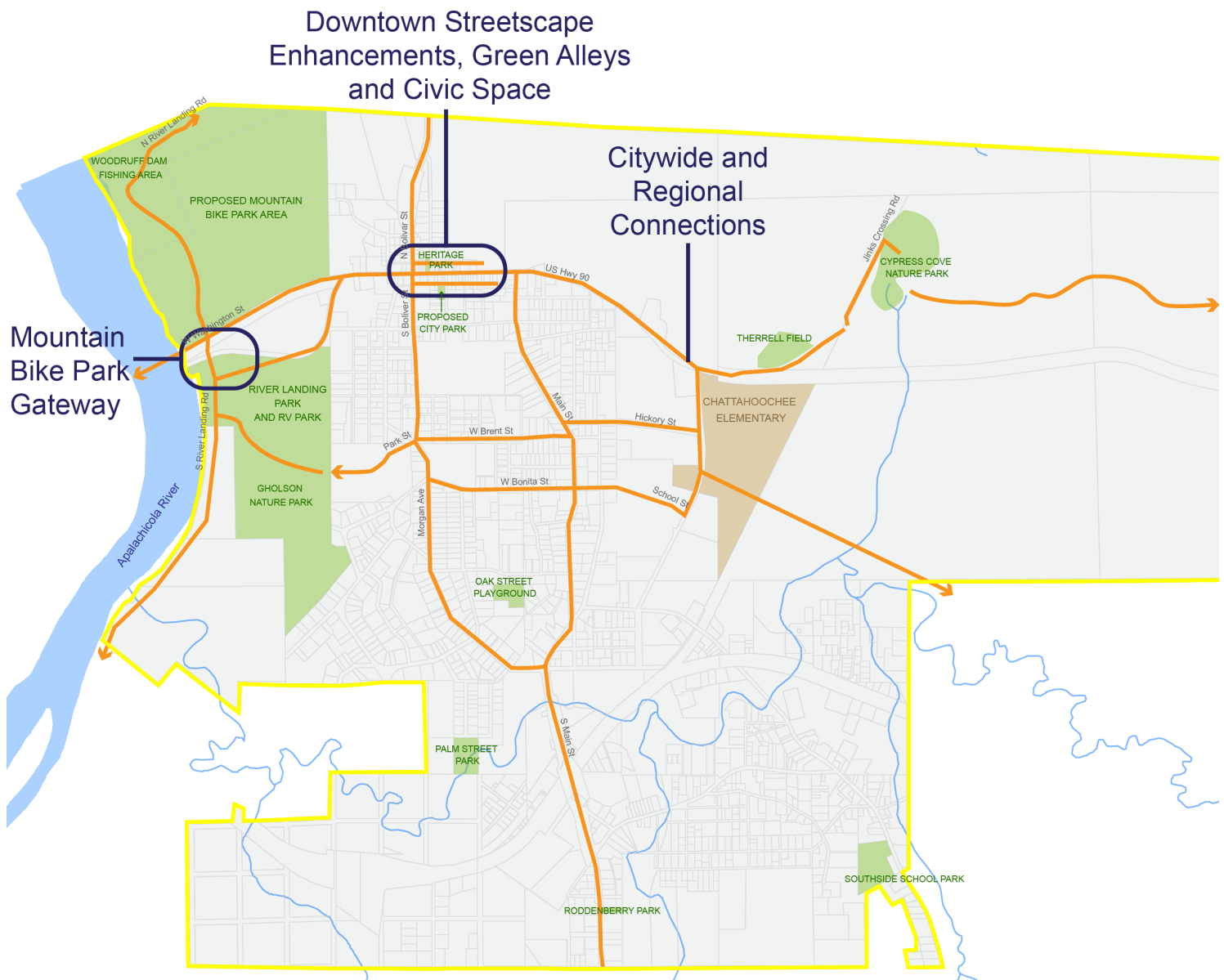
The Recovery and Resiliency Partnership Project (R2P2) is a technical assistance initiative to support the recovery of Florida Panhandle cities provided by the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Integrated Recovery Coordination field operations and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 4.

FOCUS

For the technical assistance, the City identified four areas where innovative conceptual designs can support revitalization, storm resilience and long-term economic recovery. The technical assistance team worked with the City to develop designs for each of the project sites, as well as a citywide connectivity plan that proposes safe pedestrian and bicycle options. Each design is informed by a set of sustainability principles and strategies described on pages 2-3.

Design Projects include:

Downtown Streetscape Enhancements and Green Alleys	4-5
Downtown Civic Spaces	6-7
Mountain Bike Park Gateway	8-9
Citywide Connections	10-11
Regional Connections	12-13



SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCE

Integrate long-term sustainability and resilience into rebuilding.

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PRINCIPLES

The design options in this report address the City's specific goals and challenges by integrating the principles of resilience, alternative transportation, health and wellness, and vibrant public spaces into stormwater management. This approach increases resilience of the stormwater management while improving public spaces and opportunities to bike and walk.



COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Design tools and strategies to support economic recovery and build resilience for future storm events are highlighted within each design concept. Designs include strategies to increase economic resilience by creating new greenways and green spaces that attract visitors and boost commercial opportunities and local employment. Sustainability features also increase resilience of the built environment during storm events by capturing stormwater and reducing flooding.



HEALTH & WELLNESS

Increasing opportunities for health and wellness can strengthen a community's resilience by increasing wellbeing and community ties through exercise and social interactions. In addition, recreation amenities can bolster economic recovery as recreational tourism grows in popularity. Providing opportunities to connect with the natural environment is linked to improved physical, social and mental health.



ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

Improving infrastructure for safe travel by foot and bicycle can help reduce vehicular traffic. Improvements to paddle sport access points can support a recreational economy that links biking, hiking and waterways that encourage healthier lifestyles.



VIBRANT PUBLIC SPACES

Creating attractive and welcoming public spaces can bring people into downtown areas, increase resident and visitor spending, boost local employment and drive local investment. Placemaking strategies such as signage, public art, and plantings help create vibrant spaces that build local pride and attract visitors to the area.

STRATEGIES

The design options on the following pages address specific challenges by integrating best practices to address stormwater while providing amenities to improve public spaces and biking and walking safety.

Each design option integrates one or more of the tools described on this page to help manage the volume, flow and/or treatment of stormwater and support natural ecosystems.

The icons are included on the concept design plans to indicate the tools used.



WETLAND RETENTION

Enhancing existing wetlands can provide stormwater detention, improved water quality, increased habitat and new recreational amenities.



WATERWAY RESTORATION

Vegetated buffers on either side of a waterway enhance watershed health by moderating water runoff quantities and improving water quality. The vegetation can intercept, absorb and infiltrate surface runoff to help moderate the peak runoff rates during rain events, which reduces erosion and sedimentation of the channel, keeps water cool and supports aquatic habitat.



POLLINATOR GARDENS

Many types of plants, including fruit and vegetable crops, depend on animals (such as butterflies, bees and birds) for pollination. Using pollinator-friendly plants can also help support these important species.



PERVIOUS PAVEMENT

Pervious concrete and asphalt surfaces have proven to be effective and viable alternatives to traditional paving systems. The surface allows stormwater runoff volumes to decrease, infiltration rates to increase, and pollutant loads to be reduced before reaching local water bodies.



NATIVE PLANTINGS

Incorporating vegetation into the landscape is a stormwater management technique that mimics natural drainage. Vegetated areas intercept and infiltrate rainfall to decrease stormwater volumes and can also remove pollutants.



WATER REUSE

Water reuse reclaims water from a variety of sources then treats and reuses it for beneficial purposes such as irrigation, groundwater replenishment and industrial processes. Water reuse can provide alternatives to existing water supplies and be used to enhance water security, sustainability and resilience.



PLANTED SWALES

Vegetated swales, sometimes referred to as bioswales, are broad, shallow channels designed to convey and infiltrate stormwater runoff. Swales reduce stormwater volume and improve water quality through infiltration and vegetative filtering. Swales can be planted with grasses, perennials, shrubs and trees to increase aesthetic and habitat value.



RAINWATER STORAGE

Capture systems collect and store stormwater for specific purposes, such as irrigation, and often can hold water for a significant period of time.

DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS AND GREEN ALLEYS

Support a vibrant and prosperous downtown with improved streetscapes and activated alleys.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Apalachee Regional Planning Council (ARPC) recently completed a streetscape plan for Washington Street – Chattahoochee’s Main Street – to improve pedestrian safety, parking and the overall appearance and experience for visitors and business owners.

The City is interested providing safe bicycle, pedestrian and golf cart routes from the River Landing Recreational Vehicle (RV) Park and proposed mountain bike park through downtown.

DESIGN CONCEPTS

Building on the ARPC Main Street Plan, the Main Street design concept highlights how the activity, vibrancy and unique character of Chattahoochee’s downtown can be used to help market the city as a recreation destination.

The green alley design concept focuses on the existing alleys north and south of Washington to show how they can be reconfigured to accommodate vehicular, bike and pedestrian activity to improve safety and support businesses. Artwork, plantings and natural drainage features can also improve the experience and appearance of the alleys.



Pervious pavement



Vegetated swales



Alternative transportation



MAIN STREET STREETSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS

The pedestrian area can be enhanced by the addition of bicycle racks, seating, and pedestrian-scale lighting. The designated planting areas include curb cuts allowing stormwater to be directed to these areas during a rain event. Native and adaptive plant species with low maintenance requirements can provide seasonal interest.

To expand the sidewalk zone seasonally or during special events, parallel parking spaces can be converted for seating areas or bicycle parking.

This 'parklet' concept is a temporary, low-cost option for businesses in areas with narrow sidewalks where seating is not viable. Ideally they are located adjacent to curb bumpouts and have safety measures such as curb stops and high-visibility bollards.



GREEN ALLEYS

A green alley network parallel to Washington Street provides safe bike, golf cart and pedestrian connections, and integrates natural drainage features where possible.

The one-way alley system delineates a path for pedestrians and bicycles, shown here with permeable pavers. Stormwater from the alley can be directed to adjacent native low-maintenance planting areas and public spaces such as the park shown on the left.

Murals on the walls facing this route can enhance the experience and provide opportunities to showcase local initiatives and artists.



Illustrative view of the proposed City Park and green alley

DOWNTOWN CIVIC SPACES

Enhance civic spaces to support downtown revitalization.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Occupancy in the heart of downtown is increasing, and the proposed relocation of City Hall to Washington Street can help activate the east side of downtown. The City proposes redeveloping the existing city office location as a park with parking and restroom facilities to support community events such as "Final Fridays." Heritage Park is also centrally located in the heart of downtown and could be enhanced to provide additional amenities.



Existing conditions at South Alley Street and City Hall parking lot (proposed location for green alley and City Park)

DESIGN CONCEPTS

- 1 Heritage Park** - Proposed updates for the existing Heritage Park include parking and seating areas to support nearby businesses and restaurants.
- 2 City Park** - The concept for the proposed City Park accommodates flexible uses such as performances, outdoor markets and community gatherings.



HERITAGE PARK

The proposed design updates for Heritage Park include permeable paving that supports an accessible seating area. This permeable paving will help direct stormwater into the native planting bands that frame the park. There is an expanded edge within the public right-of-way along the park for mobile food vendors. The area is intended for high-traffic daily use. On the other side of the alley, there is shared parking and a picnic area.



Illustration of proposed updates for Heritage Park

NEW CITY PARK

After City Hall is relocated, the City envisions this parcel to be used as an event space for performances, markets, movies and other larger gatherings. Located adjacent to the new alley network, the main lawn faces south toward a proposed overhead canopy structure that includes power and lighting. The old jail can be converted to public restrooms.



Illustration of proposed City Park



Event lawn



Pavilion for performance or market
Image used with permission of Denise Retallack.

MOUNTAIN BIKE PARK GATEWAY

Create a regional recreational destination to support local economic recovery.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

A mountain bike park is proposed for the large area owned by the State of Florida north of Highway 90. North River Landing Road can connect this new recreation asset and River Landing Park, which is undergoing restoration and improvements.

River Landing Park improvements are based on a community-supported master plan developed by National Park Service – Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program. The design includes new camping facilities and trails.

DESIGN CONCEPTS

The concept includes a mountain bike park gateway, a shared trailhead, and a technical skills development area in River Landing Park. These concepts enhance the recreation opportunities available at River Landing Park.

A trailhead with maps, information, seating, restrooms, a bike fix station and other amenities can serve visitors to River Landing Park and the mountain bike park. Because the area is in a flood zone, the trailhead structures should be constructed to withstand flood conditions.

A technical skills development area can provide a safe space for riders to practice and promote interest in the growing sport. The skills area is proposed on an area of higher ground located by the trailhead and includes features that can be easily constructed and relocated.

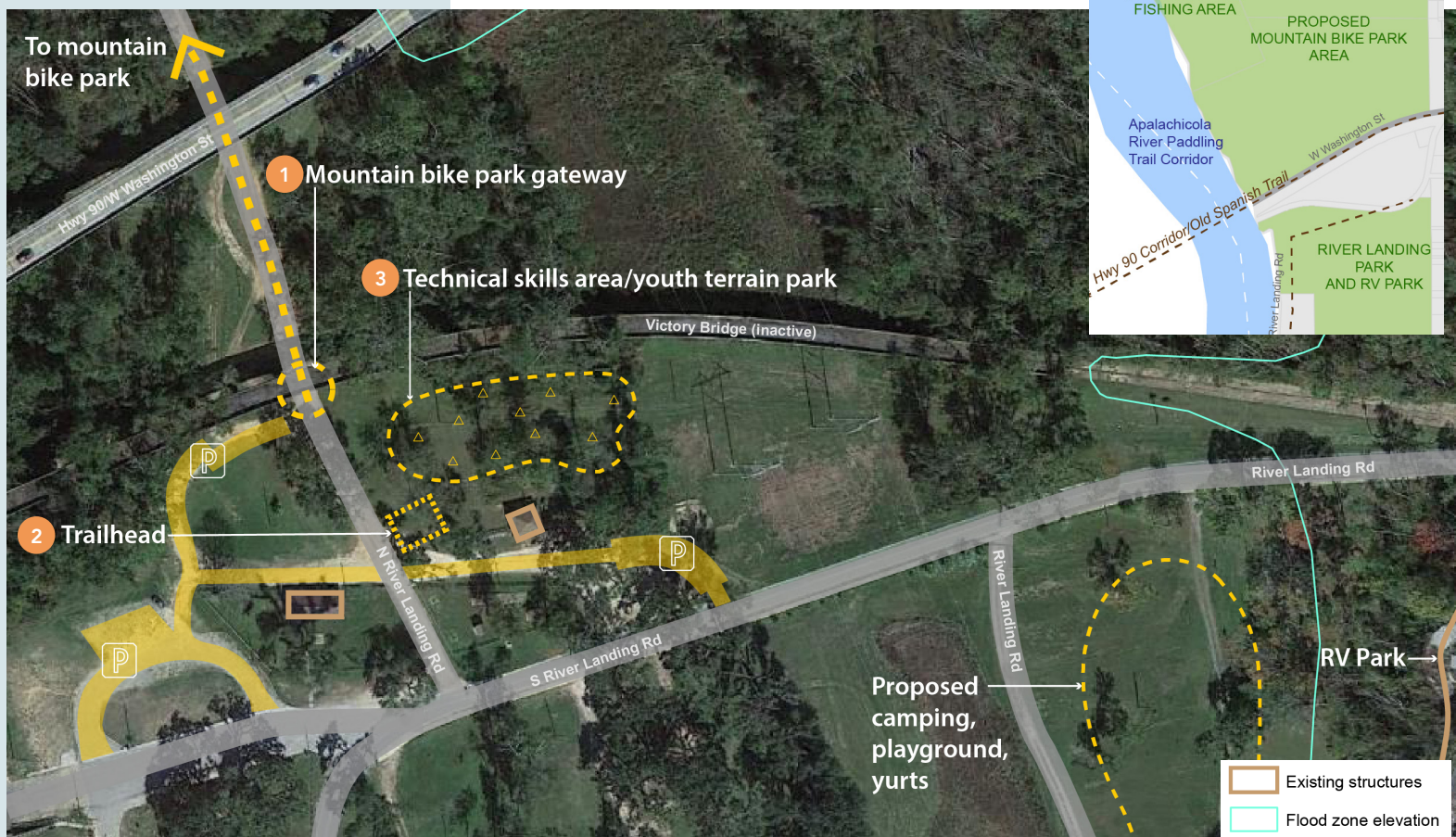




Illustration of the proposed mountain bike park gateway and River Landing Park trailhead



Existing view of proposed gateway area

MOUNTAIN BIKE PARK GATEWAY ¹ AND TRAILHEAD ²

The proposed mountain bike park gateway and River Landing Park trailhead include a shaded structure with seating, boards for posting park maps and information, and a visible entrance under Victory Bridge. The bridge section can be painted using design inspiration from the area's cultural history or other themes (shown painted with city's branding). A natural surface is proposed for the bike trail in the gateway area. A pervious paved surface might be used for high traffic areas (shown in gray above).

TECHNICAL SKILLS AREA ³

Many technical skills features can be constructed with natural or recycled materials at low costs. Simple construction also enables volunteers to help with building and maintenance and reduce potential damage to skills features during periodic flooding.



CULTURAL HERITAGE FEATURES

These examples illustrate how Chattahoochee's cultural history might be showcased at the trailhead and gateway area. Imprints might be suitable for paved walkways connecting the parking area and trailhead. The gateway can include sculptural signage that recognizes local history and culture.



Concrete imprints and sculptural signage at Bde Maka Ska, site of a Dakota village, located in Minneapolis, Minnesota



Community resilience



Alternative transportation



Health and wellness



Planted swales



Native plantings

CITYWIDE CONNECTIONS

Provide connections to businesses and community amenities.

CITYWIDE CONNECTIVITY

Connecting Chattahoochee's downtown, natural assets and regional recreation opportunities by implementing safe pedestrian and bicycle paths can support economic development, enhanced quality of life and increased property value.

There are many simple, cost-effective ways to integrate pedestrian and bike connections as part of road improvement and construction projects.

Safe bike and pedestrian connections can utilize existing infrastructure such as sidewalks, or new paths might be developed such as marked bike lanes, expanded shoulders, new sidewalks or separated paths.

SAFE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CONNECTIONS

The map on the right shows a proposed network for improved bike/pedestrian connectivity in Chattahoochee. Following are several options for integrating designated bike/pedestrian connections based on road type and safety considerations.

- 1 Corridors and Highways** (example: Highway 90)
Visually- or physically-separated paths that buffer traffic:
 - Separated bike lanes and sidewalk
 - Separated multi-use path
- 2 Local Roads** (example: Main Street)
Well-marked shared conditions if necessary, or separated paths:
 - Separated bike lane and sidewalk
 - Shared bike lane and sidewalk
- 3 Neighborhood Streets** (example: Brent Street)
Yield street conditions including signage and pavement markings



Separated bike lanes

On-street or on-shoulder marked bike lanes designate space for bicyclists (5 feet to 6 feet wide).



Separated multi-use paths

A wide paved path for a bicyclists, pedestrians, runners, scooters and others traveling for recreation or transportation. (8 feet to 12 feet wide).



Shared bike lanes

Bicycles and vehicles share the roadway marked with signs.



Yield street

Pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists share narrow neighborhood streets. Pavement markings and signs can improve awareness and safety.

CITYWIDE CONNECTIVITY PLAN

Suggested citywide bicycle and pedestrian network showing recommended bike and pedestrian routes across the city as well as connections to Florida's proposed greenway and trail networks.



Image of potential off-road Highway 90 Corridor/Old Spanish Trail route

Utility corridors can provide regional trail opportunities for off-road biking, hiking and outdoor recreation. The existing utility corridor in Chattahoochee provides an opportunity to connect to downtown from the east via Maple Street. Further to the east, this corridor connects to the city of Quincy.

REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

Create connections between downtown businesses and regional recreation opportunities.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Safety improvements are needed for pedestrians and bicyclists to move across town. Additionally, a multi-use route for pedestrians, bicyclists and golf carts between the River Landing Park/RV park to downtown can link recreation visitors to services and amenities.

Several proposed regional trails extend into Chattahoochee. Designating in-town bike lanes to improve safety and wayfinding for regional visitors connecting by way of the Highway 90 Corridor/Old Spanish Trail or the Chattahoochee to Bristol Trail can support recreation-focused economic development in the area.

DESIGN CONCEPTS

River Landing Park Connector

A dedicated, wide multi-use path can connect from River Landing Park to the green alley to improve safe connections for RV park visitors, bicyclists and pedestrians.

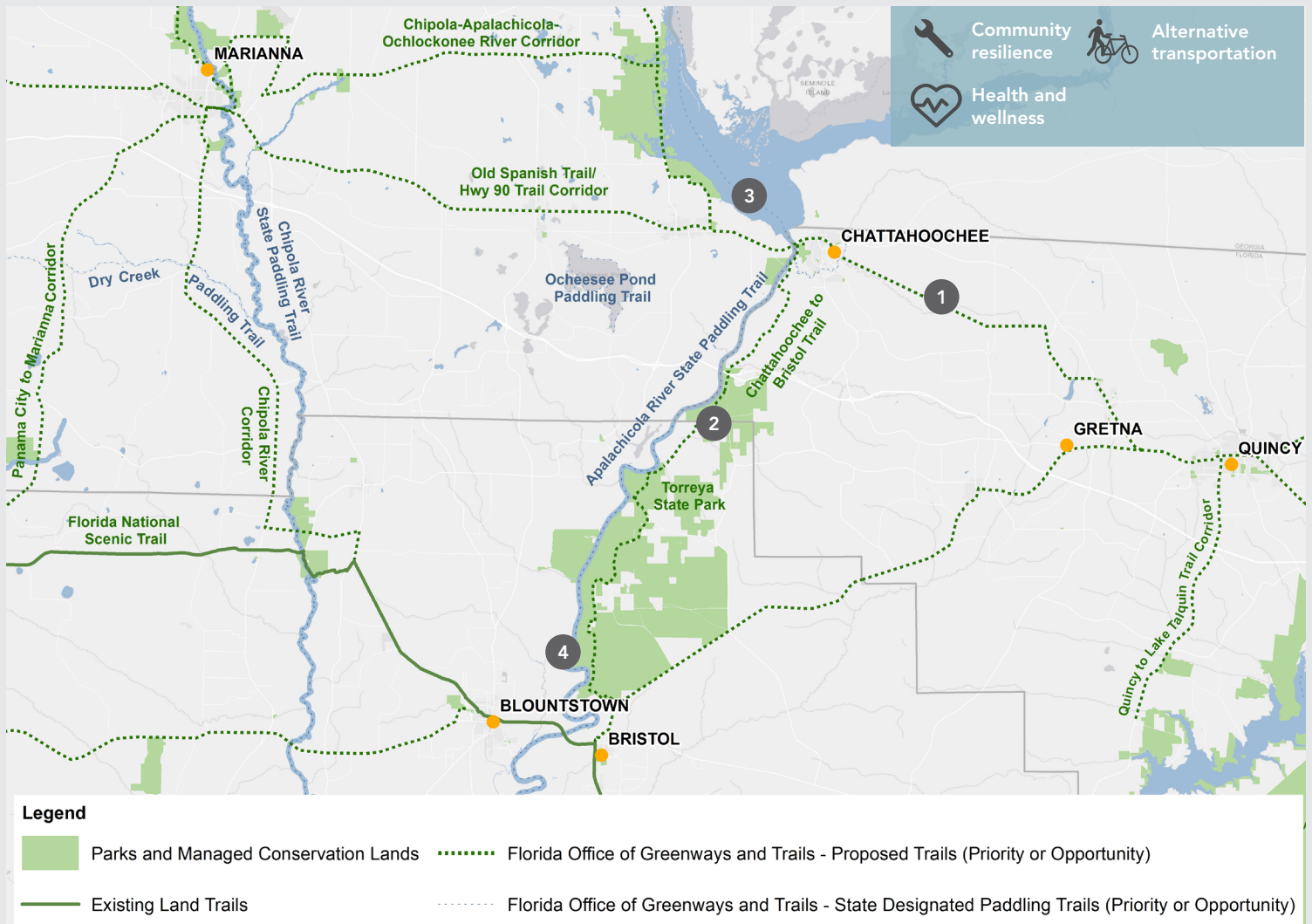
The path can be created by widening the existing sidewalk and adding safety features such as signs and pavement markings. The connection will require coordination with the Florida Department of Transportation.



Proposed extension of existing sidewalk to create multi-use path

REGIONAL ASSETS & CONNECTIONS

A network of regional trails link Chattahoochee to regional natural and recreational assets.



The Florida Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) coordinates with state and local partners to plan the development the Florida Greenways and Trails System and identify opportunities to connect with Florida State Parks. The system includes existing and proposed trails on land and water. Working with OGT, cities can build momentum for development of proposed trails that connect through their city.

1 U.S. 90 Trail Corridor/Old Spanish Trail Corridor

A planned regional priority trail that upon completion, will trace Highway 90 and connect Marianna, Chattahoochee and Quincy.

The existing highway links the Chipola and Apalachicola rivers while following the historic Old Spanish Trail.

2 Chattahoochee to Bristol Trail

A proposed opportunity land trail that connects Chattahoochee and Bristol and parallels the Apalachicola River corridor. The corridor is an area recognized by the South Atlantic and Southeast Conservation Blueprint as a high priority for conservation along the Apalachicola River to the Apalachicola National Forest.

3 Lake Seminole Paddling Trail

A proposed paddling trail on Lake Seminole.

4 Apalachicola River Blueway and Paddling Trails System

Paddling trail along the Apalachicola River, which flows from Lake Seminole through Chattahoochee and along Bristol and Blountstown.

Opportunity corridors include trails planned by cities, counties and other organizations throughout Florida, with a focus on trails that can form a comprehensive connected system when complete. Priority corridors are the focused vision for trails in the state and rank higher for implementation than opportunity corridors.

MOVING FORWARD

Strategies for project implementation.

KEY NEXT STEPS

The Recovery and Resiliency Partnership Project technical assistance provides a robust vision to implement sustainable design strategies that support Chattahoochee's recovery and improve resilience.

Implementation of the proposed design strategies will require a combination of actions to help move the projects forward. Key actions include:

- Continue to evaluate and prioritize which projects to initiate first.
- Identify project lead(s) and partners needed to implement and maintain the project.
- Continue to engage the public on timing, design development and design decisions.
- Conduct engineering studies and site plan designs to advance projects.
- Assemble funding, which may come from a variety of sources.
- Remain flexible and creative to respond to new opportunities as they arise.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

An appendix of additional information and resources to support the implementation of these design concepts is available at www.r2p2.skeo.com/chattahoochee. For more information about R2P2, please contact: Rick Durbrow, U.S. EPA Region 4 at Durbrow.Rick@epa.gov or call 404-562-8286.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

City staff and leadership provided guidance and direction throughout the project and the community offered valuable feedback to inform the design concepts. Staff from a range of regional, state and federal agencies and organizations offered their technical assistance and expertise in helping the City connect their vision to implementation opportunities.

R2P2 Partners

